

Little sense and less sensibility: the governmentâ€™s...

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I watched the Prime Minister's press conference last night. I read the 'road map'. I read expert reaction in the media and on Twitter. And I came to the obvious conclusion. That is that the likelihood is that we will be spending the summer in lockdown with very large numbers of Covid deaths overwhelming the NHS as it collapses under the strain of staff resignations from those who can take no more.

The current Covid reality is that the NHS is still at capacity with Covid and has no room for normal service.

The reality is that second dose vaccines are but a pipe dream, with there appearing to be little intention to begin supplying them, with the focus remaining on single doses.

The reality is that mutations are happening.

The reality is that some of the data on efficacy, such as the recent Scottish data, is being seriously questioned as to its reliability.

The reality is that it is still very hard to say that much of the decline in cases is due to anything but lockdown, although it does seem death rates for those with the vaccine are falling.

The reality is that death is not the only bad outcome from Covid. Long Covid is too, and we have no idea what its long term impact may be.

And the reality is that R is only just below 1 now and will rise, probably above 1, with school reopenings, and could go much higher with the date rather than data driven planned reopenings, which Johnson will find it virtually impossible to vary.

It seems that the medical, epidemiological and virological experts all agree Johnson's plan has massive risk in it. Even Laura Kuensberg commented that it appears to have the assumption of at least 30,000 more deaths built into it. Many experts seem to think that a significant underestimate. And yet the plan goes ahead.

There appears to be little sense to this. The plan is built in the hope that the vaccines might, on the basis of single doses, and few and questioned results, deliver outcomes much better than hoped. That's a massive assumption. It could very easily be wrong.

And there is even less sensibility. The assumption is that we are used to deaths now, and just shrug them off.

Based on that logic we are being told the risk is ours to take. The government says it will not lockdown again. So now it will be our fault if Covid spreads. And they will be our deaths to take responsibility for too.

But if some of the expert predictions - of new deaths of up to 100,000 people, for example - come to pass (and I hope they do not) not only does that imply an NHS wholly unable to cope, but it would make denial of responsibility impossible.

No one knows the future, of course. The assumptions in the plan may turn out to be good ones. They might also not do so. So far, none of the government's assumptions have been good. You could say it's due a break. Equally, you can extrapolate. I am in the extrapolation school of thought. This looks like reckless indifference to me.

I am not booking my summer holiday right now. I have quite a strong sense that it will be at home.